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Rochester

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation

May, 1939

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THE FOOD STAMP PLAN

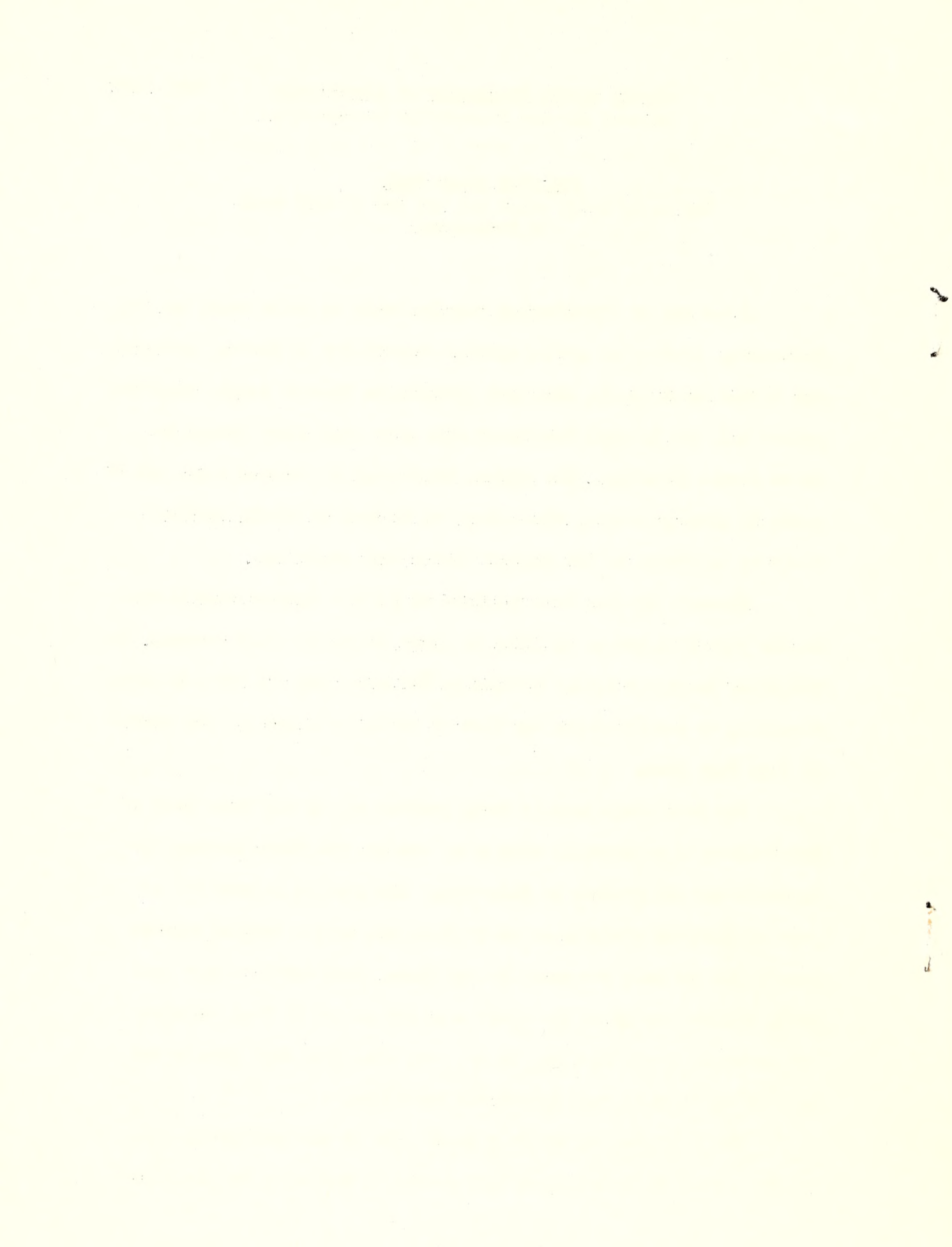
Why it is being tried out and how it will work  
in Rochester.

A new way of distributing surplus foods is being tried out in Rochester. Instead of giving surplus commodities to States, counties, and cities which in the past have distributed them to people receiving public aid, the Federal Government will give food order stamps to these people directly. The stamps, which will be colored blue, can be taken to grocery stores, where they can be used to obtain surplus foods as additions to the present family food supplies.

Everyone who has been eligible to receive surplus commodities in the past will now be eligible to apply to receive food stamps. In addition, Rochester people working on WPA jobs, and all other persons receiving or certified for any form of public aid, can get the stamps if they want them.

The food stamp plan is being carried out by the Department of Agriculture in cooperation with city, county, and State welfare agencies and the grocers of Rochester. The idea is to make use of some of the farm products of which there has been a surplus because people did not have the money to buy them. Many families have been going without enough of the foods that are needed to keep children and grown-up people healthy, at the very same time that farmers had more of these foods than housewives could buy.

The main idea of the food stamp plan is the same as the idea of the commodity distribution that people in Rochester are familiar



with -- to use part of the farm surplus to give city families a chance to have better balanced diets. However, the stamp plan is different from the old distribution plan as it operated at Stillson Street Depot.

In the future, there will not be any surplus commodity depots for Rochester people. The Department of Agriculture will name the surplus food products. People using the stamps can go right to grocery stores that are cooperating in the program and use the surplus food order stamps to get any of these surplus commodities that they want. People using the stamps will have a wider variety of surplus commodities to choose from than they had at the distribution depot.

The surplus food stamps will be colored blue. One will be given free with every two orange stamps purchased. The orange stamps will be good for the purchase of any food usually sold in a grocery store. The people who are eligible to receive the blue stamps free must pay 25 cents each for the orange stamps. Each stamp, whether orange or blue, is good for 25 cents worth of food. For each \$1 worth of orange stamps bought, the family will receive 50 cents worth of blue stamps free. For example, a family which buys \$8 worth of orange stamps will get \$4 worth of blue surplus food stamps without extra cost.

Details of how to get the food stamps and how to use them are given in the following questions and answers.

1. Q. What kinds of stamps will be issued?

A. Blue stamps and orange stamps. The blue stamps will not cost anything. They can be used only for obtaining surplus food products. Each one will be good for 25 cents worth of those foods. The orange stamps will cost 25 cents each, and each one will be good for any food product, whether it is surplus food or not.



2. Q. What foods are surplus?

A. The products which the Secretary of Agriculture has declared to be surplus and which are listed in the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation Bulletin as food products for which blue surplus food order stamps may be used. The first bulletin will probably include such commodities as butter, grapefruit, oranges, dried fruits, beans, and eggs. Fresh vegetables might be added as they come into surplus later during the season.

3. Q. Can the list of surplus foods be changed?

A. Yes. The list may be changed from time to time. If the surplus of a product is used up, that product will be taken off the list. If the surplus of some other product piles up, that product will be added to the list. Official lists of surplus commodities that can be bought with blue stamps will be sent to grocery stores to be posted there. Any change in the list will be given wide publicity.

4. Q. Will orange stamps be good for anything except food?

A. Yes. Orange stamps can be used to get household articles usually bought in grocery stores, such as starch and soap. However, orange stamps cannot be used to get beer, wine, liquor or any kind of tobacco, or food usually eaten at stores.

#### HOW TO GET THE STAMPS

5. Q. Who is eligible to receive food stamps?

A. Any person certified as eligible for public assistance or who is at work on a WPA project, or any person receiving public assistance under the social security program or direct assistance from State, county, or city agencies such as general or home relief, old age assistance, aid to dependent children, and aid to the blind.

6. Q. Can persons certified as eligible for public assistance, but not actually receiving it, obtain stamps?

A. Yes, they can buy the orange stamps on the same basis as those who are receiving general relief or public aid under the social security program or other forms of public assistance.

7. Q. Can blue stamps be obtained separately?

A. No. Blue stamps will be issued only to eligible people who buy the required minimum amount of orange stamps. The blue and orange stamps will be issued together, in the same books.





8. Q. Will all books contain the same number of stamps?

A. No. Books will be issued in the following five different sizes to take care of different size family groups:

\$2 worth of orange stamps and \$1 worth of blue stamps  
\$4 worth of orange stamps and \$2 worth of blue stamps  
\$6 worth of orange stamps and \$3 worth of blue stamps  
\$8 worth of orange stamps and \$4 worth of blue stamps  
\$10 worth of orange stamps and \$5 worth of blue stamps

9. Q. How many stamps can one person get at one time?

A. At least enough to supply \$1 worth of orange stamps a week for each member of his family. If a man has a wife and two children, he may buy \$4 worth of orange stamps for each week between the days on which he gets his WPA wages or relief payment. If he is paid twice a month, he may buy \$8 worth of orange stamps for each pay period. Such a man buying \$8 worth of orange stamps would get \$4 worth of blue stamps good for surplus food.

10. Q. Can a person buy more than \$1 worth of orange stamps a week for each person in his family?

A. Yes. If he wants to he can buy orange stamps at the rate of about \$1.50 a week for each member of his family.

11. Q. How will a person employed on a WPA job pay for orange stamps?

A. If he requests, deductions will be made from his wages to pay for the orange stamps he will be eligible to buy. For example, if he gets \$20 each pay day and is eligible to purchase \$8 worth of orange stamps for the two-week period he will, if he requests, receive a check for \$12 and with the check will receive \$8 worth of orange stamps, together with \$4 worth of free blue stamps.

12. Q. How will a WPA worker apply for stamps?

A. He will be given a form to make out, and on this form he will tell whether he wants the minimum amount or maximum amount of orange stamps he is eligible to receive each pay day.

13. Q. Where can WPA workers get application blanks?

A. They can get application blanks from their project foreman.

14. Q. How will eligible people other than WPA workers get orange stamps?

A. They can buy the stamps with cash from their relief payments. They can cash their checks as they have in the past, and use part of the money to buy the orange stamps.



15. Q. Where will stamps be on sale?

A. At the Old Post Office Building, on the corner of Fitzhugh and Church Streets.

16. Q. Will identification be necessary in order to buy orange colored stamps?

A. Yes, it will be necessary for each eligible person to bring the special identification card that will be mailed to him for this purpose, in order to be able to buy the stamps.

17. Q. If, rather than use his stamps, an eligible person needs to get all or a part of his money back on the orange colored stamps he has purchased, may he do so?

A. Yes, if because of some emergency he needs to, he can get his money back on the orange stamps he has not used provided the person to whom the stamps are issued returns them together with blue stamps in the same ratio in which they were received.

#### HOW TO USE THE STAMPS

18. Q. What stores will accept stamps in return for food?

A. All grocery stores that wish to take part in the plan.

19. Q. Can the stamps be used in grocery stores outside the city limits?

A. No, not during the first few months while the plan is being tried out.

20. Q. Can stamp books be traded or sold?

A. No. They can be used only for food and only by the families to whom they are issued. Any holder of stamps or grocer who misuses them will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine and imprisonment.

21. Q. Can stamps be used to pay a bill or an account already owing to a grocery store.

A. No. Stamps cannot be used to pay old bills or accounts.

22. Q. Will stores accept stamps that have been taken out of books?

A. No. The stamps must be taken out of the books at the time they are used in making purchases.



23. Q. Can anyone besides the person to whom the stamps are issued use them in grocery stores?

A. Yes, either the person to whom they are issued or a member of his family may bring the book to the grocery store and use the stamps for food. If the grocer does not know the person who brings in the book he can require that person to identify himself.

24. Q. Must persons save the books after all the blue and orange stamps are used?

A. Yes, because the empty covers must be turned in before new books can be bought. This will be true of all book covers except those bought the last time. These must be turned in at the time the next purchase of stamps is made. For example, if an eligible person gets his first book of stamps on the 15th of the month, he can get his second book on the last day of that month or during the early part of the next month without turning in the covers of the book purchased on the 15th. However, before he can get his book of stamps on the 15th of the next month he must turn in the cover of the book he received on the 15th of the month before. WPA workers also must turn in empty books which are more than one pay period old.

25. Q. Can an eligible person buy additional stamps if he loses the cover or the book that was issued to him previously?

A. Yes. A person who loses a book or cover will be eligible to buy additional books in the prescribed manner if he signs an affidavit form to the effect that there has been such loss.

26. Q. How can the stamps be used in stores?

A. Grocers will accept each stamp at its full face value. One 25 cent orange colored stamp is good for 25 cents worth of any food. One 25 cent blue stamp is good for 25 cents worth of any food that is on the surplus list.

27. Q. Can orange colored stamps be used for food of the kind that is usually eaten at the grocery store?

A. No. Orange stamps cannot be used for food which is usually consumed on the premises of a store.

28. Q. Will a person using blue stamps to buy foods on the surplus list get exactly the same products as people who pay cash?

A. Yes, and at the same price.

29. Q. Can grocers give change to customers using blue or orange colored stamps?

A. No.



30. Q. If food that costs less than 25 cents is bought can stamps be used?

A. Yes, if the grocer will agree to give the customer credit for future delivery of surplus food if a blue stamp is given to him, or credit for future delivery of any food if an orange stamp is given.

31. Q. If food is bought that costs more than 25 cents but less than 50 cents, or more than 50 cents but less than 75 cents and so forth, what can be done?

A. The holder of the stamps can do one of three things: (1) He can pay in cash the amount over 25 cents or 50 cents or 75 cents as the case may be. (2) If the grocer will agree, the holder can get credit for future delivery of surplus food if a blue stamp is given, or the holder can get credit for future delivery of any food if an orange stamp is given, or (3) The holder can increase his purchase of surplus food up to the value of the next blue stamp or his purchase of any food up to the value of the next orange stamp as the case may be.

32. Q. Will surplus commodities be distributed from relief depots to Rochester people as they have been in the past?

A. No, not while the experimental food stamp plan is in operation.

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